

ISSUE #25

March/April 1986


Vol. V No. I

JERSEY BEAT

\$1

THERE'S NO
PLACE
LIKE HOME!

urgent fury
spiral jetty

Sme 
mod fun
Great Wall

IN THIS ISSUE...

PUNK

TEEN

bonus
'zine!

4th Anniversary Issue!



Published bi-monthly by
Kitchen Table Publications.
Strictly a non-profit org.

418 Gregory Ave.
Weehawken, N.J. 07087

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* * * * *

PATRICK CLARKE

Pat Clarke didn't slam dance or wear paisly shirts; the last few years of his life, he rarely had the money or the inclination to see much live music. But anyone who was around to watch the New York/New Jersey Punk scene struggle through the Post-Punk burnout of the late '70's and crawl into the 1980's knew Pat Clarke and owes him a debt. He managed the Speedies, Phosphenes, NNB, and Autonomy (who went on to become Winter Hours). He booked a number of clubs, most memorably a short-lived but wonderful gig at a blue-collar gin mill under the PATH tracks in Harrison, NJ called the Silver Dollar Saloon, where everyone from the then-nascent hardcore scene to the Bongos played and had a good time. His Tonka Wonka Mondays introduced the idea of cheap weeknight shows with an early starting time, a concept that lives on at Folk City with The Big Combo series. Under the pen name Jack Wild, he published a one-page fanzine and contributed to others. I don't think Pat ever made a dollar from any of it, but he loved music and enjoyed being around people who made it, and he gave of his time and talent and energy better than most. Pat Clarke died in January, much too young and with too much left to do. He was a friend of 5 years and a lot of us are going to miss him. A lot of what he helped get started - including Jersey Beat - is still around, and those of us who knew him will remember him fondly always. This issue is dedicated to his memory.



FEBRUARY/MARCH #25 VOL. V NO. I

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Jim Testa

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bruce Gallanter
Pattie Kleinke
Mike Stark
L. Cravat
Dave Run It
Dan X.
Greg Gutbezahl

Jim DeRogatis
Dawn Eden
'Metal' Mike Ferris
Andy Peters
Andrew Reich
Chris Friedrich
John Crawford

Senior Chief Adviser

Howard Wuelfing



LIGHT APPETITES!

JERSEY BEAT

IN "HOBOKEN POPCORN"

SO TELL ME,
JIM -- WHAT
EXACTLY IS
THIS "HOBOKEN
SOUND" THAT
ALL THE ROCK
CRITTERS ARE
YAPPIN' ABOUT?



IT'S A COMBINATION
OF SKILLED SONGWRITING,
CATCHY MELODIES, A
DELICATE RYTHYM,
DELIGHTFUL PHRASINGS,
AND AN INSIGHT THAT
CAPTURES THE ESSENCE
OF OUR LOCALE AND ITS
RELATIONSHIPS...

IN OTHER
WORDS, IT'S
POP GROUPS
WITH NO
BALLS,
RIGHT?



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HAVING GIRLS
IN ROCK BANDS,
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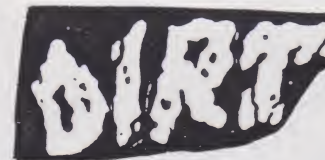
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fanzines

CONFLICT #37

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Uh oh, look who's back. The whiz kid prexy of Homestead Records returns to fanzinedom, promising a new thin ish every 2 weeks along the lines of the Offense Newsletter - all type, few pics, and G.Cosloy's usual mix of acerbic wit, pungent criticism, Godlike good taste, and fearless proselytizing for the righteous and needy. The big comeback ish takes a big healthy swipe at Gutbank, Tiny Lights, and Monica Dee, among others. Sure to enliven the scene (and maybe even inspire a few donnybrooks) around here; Boston's loss is our pain in the butt but it's nice to have him back. Send a SASE.

AWAY FROM THE PULSEBEAT (\$3)
537 Park Ave. Hoboken NJ 07030
A big fat issue of Art Black's rampant rockcritting and tons of Monica Dee's photos. Black attacks music so relentlessly and with such reasoned sense that his musings inspired me to re-think my evaluations of the Misfits (sorry, Art, they were still one-note hacks) and several recent records. I'd call him a cool Christgau if that still didn't sound vaguely insulting. Recommended, even if the photos did come out kinda dark and smudgy.

DAMAGED

Box 317, Buck Hill Falls, PA 18323
Editor Chris just sent me a 7-page letter detailing his plans for this small-format h-c 'zine, so send him a SASE and find out for yourself. Formerly D.O.D.

CLASSIFIEDS CLASSIFIEDS CLASSIFIEDS

Producer seeks bands/musicians to submit cassette demos for all-original LP project, "Dream Sequence." Will consider all types of music. Send cassette or call for more info:
Stellar Voice Productions
6104-7 Turnabout La.
Columbia, MD 21044
(301) 730-1496

SUBURBAN UPRISING II, the 2nd Jersey Beat compilation is coming! We're looking for local bands who would like to contribute a song... all proceeds go to help keep Jersey Beat going. Send cassette or write for more info:
Jim Testa/Jersey Beat
418 Gregory Ave. Weehawken NJ 07087

THE GARGOYLES, a heavy-metal punk band from the Rahway area, is looking for a new drummer. Interested? Respond c/o Jersey Beat.

MESSAGE FROM AMERICA: HARDCORE COMES OF AGE
c/o Dave Jones, RD2 Box 200, Branchville, NJ
07826, \$6.00.

First of all, no review of this record would be complete without mentioning the breathtaking beauty of the blue vinyl upon which it is pressed (only 1000 copies, all you collectors out there). In itself a good reason to buy the record. Now, as far as the music...

Black Out - One great metal song. Now understand, I hate metal, but this is a great song. A bunch of guys from the Black Bastards Motorcycle Club did this and it's enjoyable as hell. Sure it has guitar solos, but who cares?

MENTAL ABUSE - One of the catchiest songs they've ever written. The lyrics sound like they were made up on the spot so Sid would have something to do while the band played. Are they dumb? Sure, what do you expect from Mental Abuse? If you like them, you'll love this.

SEIZURE - Four excellent mid-tempo tunes from this CT. band. Herds better than "Jackie" on the Party Animal compilation. All the titles sound like they were taken from a Mental Abuse album - "Corporate Asshole," "Abuse," "Living In The Streets" (of filth?).

AGNOSTIC FRONT - A new version of "United Blood" from their first EP, this time with really crisp production.

"Time Will Come" - typical AF, not too memorable. This is the last HC stuff they'll be doing, supposedly, since they have "progressed" (read - gone metal).

VIOLENT IMAGE - Best song on the album, "Same To Me." Reminded me of Murphy's Law. The other two are decent thrash.

SUBURBAN FLASHBACK - Most of what is now Hollow Bodies have two vaguely old-style songs here. They both stand out from everything else on the LP because there are no metal or thrash overtones and unique vocals. Lyrics are decent but, come on, I've heard enough songs about World War III!

Overall, pretty good as compilations go and there isn't a single bad song on the album. But if you have to choose, I'd go with "New Jersey's Got It?" because this one has no band info and no A.O.D. As always, support local hardcore.

- Andrew Reich

MAKE IT WORK

Run It Fanzine Compilation, 17 Poplar St. Waterbury, CT \$1.50

With the 7 short h-c blasts on this nifty red-vinyl 7-incher, Editor Dave of Run It has ably captured all the qualities that make his fanzine so great: a dedicated and serious appreciation of current issues (rep. by the Vatican Commandos' two politico-thrashers), a good healthy disrespect for the assholes who ruin "the scene" for everyone else (Youth Of Today's "We Might Just Fight" and Chronic Disorder's funny, self-deprecating "Unmashable"), and a strong sense of humor (Seizure's funny "Mary Lou"). And a great 'zine all for \$1.50!! Run It? Read it!!!

- Jim Testa

THE ORIGIN OF GRAPEFRUIT

Compilation cassette
% Chris Xefos, 15 Ash Pl., Huntington, NY 11743

What do garage bands from Lawn Guylin have that combos from other places don't? Voices. Of the 18 songs (from 8 different bands represented here, all from Long Island), almost every one has a memorable lead vocal and most have lots of well-crafted harmony backups. Lots of slow, pretty songs too, which point up the powerful role model that the Mosquitos have become for the whole L.I. scene, I guess. Mosquito Vance Breschia even shows up on several tracks. As for the rest, the Secret Service's "I've Been Hurt (Everybody)" gets the nod as the rockin'est cut; stately Wayne Manor belting out the lead vocal and Steve Pepper pounding the skins with r'n'r authority. The Service is the only band on the tape to have made any impact on the New York club scene and they play like the only band here who's ever gotten people up on their feet and dancing to prove it. Of the slower, pop stuff, the Riddles do a beautiful reading of the Merry Go Round's classic "Time" and the Love-masters (featuring Chris Xefos himself) have a pick-to-click with their pretty "It's Not Enough." For a compilation mostly recorded in a basement studio on a Tascam Portastudio, Grapefruit has more than its share of solidly produced, well-written material. Long Island, ya should be proud.

- Jim Testa

compilations

Whatever Happened to Tiny Lights and Spiral Jetty...or,

by Jim DeRogatis

Foul, verminous, wretched parasites sucking out the lifeblood of creativity...maggots slithering through the decaying corpse of rock 'n roll... mother-rapers...father-rapers!...putrid lowlife scum bent on ruining the (innocent) lives of young Americans - such is the Music Industry today, for if there were even a pretense of justice in the bowels of that miserable, bloated beast, then the two incredible collections of music before me would already be etched into vinyl instead of languishing on Sony C-90's.

I wasn't going to write anything about the new albums by Tiny Lights and Spiral Jetty because (a) I've already written about both bands quite a bit and (b) why not wait for the records to come out? But the music these bands have put down so inspired me that I couldn't resist, and unfortunately, the Music Industry - and that includes you, O Hip Purveyors of Underground Music! - just ain't paying attention. So here goes...

Tiny Lights' Prayer For The Halcyon Fear is the type of album best listened to late, late at night, in total darkness, with the rain beating against the window. Like the best of Van Morrison, it stirs up private emotions and plays on the senses of wonder and despair simultaneously. The group's songwriting has become increasingly sophisticated, and so has the production. John Hamilton's approach recalls the Feelies' on Crazy Rhythms; he has created a complex mosaic of instruments and voices that fit together perfectly. Each of the 8 songs here is a completely-realized piece of baroque pop with all the psychedelic underpinnings (distant vocals, backwards guitars, organ solos, layers of percussion, etc.), yet the band's playing and the production never overpower the beauty of the songs. This is the sort of album one could write volumes on (I would but Jim wouldn't let me), an amazing accomplishment that blows away everything California bands like the Rain Parade and their cronies have done, and one that deserves a wide, appreciative audience.

Likewise Spiral Jetty's album-to-be, the result of two sessions: One self-produced and the other directed by Feelies Glenn Mercer and Bill Million. I prefer the 5 songs from the former to the five from the latter; Spiral Jetty learned much from Million and Mercer, then applied it to get a sound closer to the pent-up fury of their live shows. With this record, the Jetties finally prove themselves more than a collection of their influences, especially on newer material like "Baltimore," "I Swear," and "Something Will Come." Each is rife with distinguishable points of reference (Feelies, Talking Heads, surf instrumentals, Modern Lovers) yet they have a vitality that is unique. I can't exactly finger what it is - maybe the literate good humor of Adam Potkay, the auteur here - but it's there and it's impossible to resist. Ditto the rhythms, skewed beats which work themselves into your brain's movement center until you're carried along, unawares...and you love every minute of it.

SO LISTEN UP, MUSIC INDUSTRY - perhaps I'm wrong, perhaps every record exec type is not a vile spewbucket. Prove it: Fill out this coupon and return it to Jersey Beat so we can forward it on to the bands. Is there a God? Will this music make it onto vinyl? Only time will tell.

Love Is Lovelier
The Second Time Around



Dear (circle one) Tiny Lights/Spiral Jetty:

- ☐ Yes, I would like to hear your tape so I can release it!
- ☐ No, I don't want to hear your tape. I am a vile spewbucket.

It starts with some superfluous studio chatter and then takes off with some of the most beautiful music ever heard by human ears. Jangly guitars, two and three-part harmonies, sensitive, intelligent lyrics...Doesn't sound like the Creeping Pumpkins at all - sounds more like the Byrds. It sounds exactly like the Byrds. In fact, it IS the Byrds! Rick Sullivan had given me the WRONG tape!!!

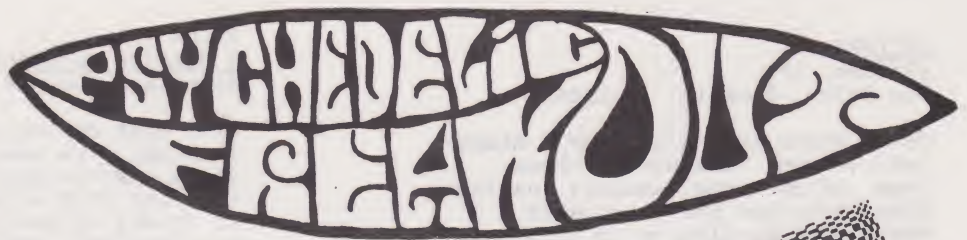
Rick picked up his rare Byrds demos and left the real Creeping Pumpkins tape soon after. The real Pumpkins demo is so garage-punk that it bears no comparison to the Byrds. It begins with their cover of the Aztex' "I Said Move!" Rick snarls threateningly. If the band directed this song towards me, I wouldn't just move - I'd flee to another state! The rest of the demo is in the same vein - macho, possessive lyrics; fuzzboxes driven past their logical limits; and vocals snotty enough to make you want to send Mr. Sullivan a lifetime supply of Kleenex.

On the fact of it, this may sound like just another grungy demo from just another nouveau-garage band. However, the Creeping Pumpkins have something going for them that sets them apart from the rest: Attitude! [I thought it was Dave Weckerman - Ed.] Sullivan, on lead vocals and rhythm guitar, bassist Dan Don Diego, lead guitarist Ray Reynolds, and drummer Dave Weckerman (yes, he of the Feelies) have all been involved with the local music scene for some time. They're playing this music because they love it, not simply because they want to prove to everyone how good they are. The result is a demo that, like the band, is naturally raw and unpolished. I can't say any of the songs contains any emotional depth. The 3 originals and 3 covers all deal with material pleasures like sex and booze. But even tho I usually prefer more substance, this music contains such unrestrained carnality that what it lacks in emotion, it makes up for in sexual energy.

The result leaves you a feeling of emotional numbness and sexual satisfaction. [Do you have to smoke a cigarette afterwards? - Ed.] A strange combination, if you ask me, but for now I'll be happy listening to the Byrds to cathartize my feelings and the Creeping Pumpkins to cathartize my libido.

- Dawn Eden

THE SHAPE of THINGS to COME



CREEPING PUMPKINS

by Peter Snell

THE MOD FUN

Hangin' Round EP, Making Tyme Records
131 W. Passaic St. Maywood NJ 07607

With the steady confidence of a hidden time-bomb counting down to zero, Mod Fun ignites in calculated, controlled frenzy on their new 3-song EP. The emphasis on beat, the essential element in Mod Fun's live shows and past recordings, continues here: Bassist Bob Strete and drummer Chris Collins groove together like a well-oiled jet engine while guitarist Mick London strips a thousand gears overhead. However, the trio's developing awareness of themselves as

musicians, performers, and

recording artists enables them to temper the fury of the Batman beat with an approach more relaxed and expressive than ever before. The band charges its songs with vigor and clarity, creatively fusing diverse 6T's influences with a bedrock facility for contemporary pop.

Ron Rimsite (of 99th Floor fame) thoughtfully and artfully helped craft the sound on this disc. On "I Believe" and "You've Been Hangin' Round," there's a desirable cave dynamic but the basic tracks remain fresh and upfront. Sound is layered on sound; subtle, sometimes baffling aural constructs based on sparse instrumental arrangements suggest fullness, even lushness, in places. Songwriter Mick (the sleeve credits "Mick Lonsdale") finds an eloquence the source of which is as much bravado and pretention as desperation and angst. Vocalist Mick sings of intimacy and rejection, commitment and independence, love

and love discarded; his voice measuring the poignant and sneering emotions equally well. But it is sadness, not anger or rage, that inspires the heart of these songs.

A band, like a person, must creatively respond to the challenges of growing up. On this EP, Mod Fun matures, deepening its musical and lyrical repertoire. The songs burn with a cool fuse at their center, identifying that which is still mod about Mod Fun. This EP is a promise of what they will become.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

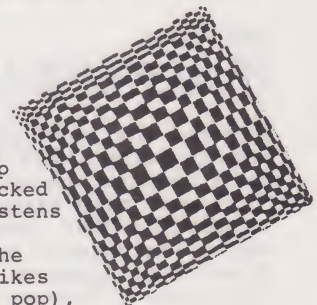
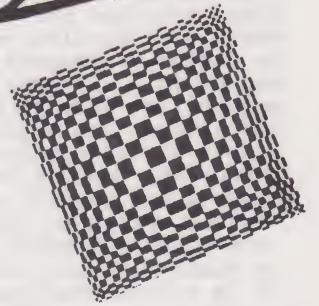
Incognito, 28 Oxford Rd., Englishtown, NJ 07726 (\$5)

This compilation cassette from the groovy 6T's zine Incognito has the right idea about all this Sixties revival music: Keep your heart & soul in the rockin' 6T's but at least one ear cocked to the sounds of today. So while this tape proffers first listens to some hot new Cave Stomp faves like the Optic Nerve and the Blacklight Chameleons, and a few psychedelic 6T's covers by the ever-groovy Mod Fun, there are also mod-ern sounds from the likes of Great Wall (Velvets-y new-wave drone), Ray Mason (new-wave pop), Tiny Lights (post-psychedelic mood music) and Bandaiddo (weird whatchamacallit). Plus Lord John, the Love Pushers, the Buzz, and Larry 'Incognito' Grogan's own basement band, the Phantom 5.

Wow!

- 'Metal' Mike Ferris

'Psychedelic Freakout' art by Michael Bellan



ARTLESS

Placebo, LP
Box 23316, Phoenix, AZ 85063

Mykel Board is one of Punk's dissident voices. Frequently obnoxious, often wrong, usually insulting, Board provides the invaluable service of forcing us to think by making us respond to his rantin' and ravin'. If only his rockin' and rollin' were as palatable. But without the vision of an Albin or the bitchin' backup combo of Tesco Vee, Board's Artless rarely rises above pedestrian garage-punk. He does challenge his audience with "How Much Punk Rock (Do You Hear In Russia?)", but the rest of the LP is either predictable or condescending. Bah, humbug, support the twisted old geek anyway, while he still cares enough to bother. Believe me, you'll miss him when he's gone.

- Jim Testa

THE WAYFARERS

"Esperanto"/"Wonderful Wonder"
Lolita import 45

This 45 is a sublime piece of kitsch, a wonderfully sophisticated yet campy joke (as befits a band composed of Columbia students). The Wayfarers are 60's revivalists who's rather cover "The Girl From Ipanema" than "99th Floor;" the two originals here sound more like they could have come from some forgotten 1968 Italian sex comedy soundtrack I prefer "Esperanto," which has some fine trumpet work and Shari Beckner's gonad-churning vocals, but both cuts are fun. A gas.

- Jim DeRogatis

MAGGOT SANDWICH

Dead To The World, 7" EP
KML, Box 9391, Pensacola, FL 32513

This is pretty lame hardcore, covering the usual topics with the usual lack of insight, original musical ideas, or a trace of humor "Communism" is an anti-military diatribe, "Gut bomb" is about burgers, "Everything I touch" is a depressing song about being a miserable failure, and "You're A Bum" is about fighting with your parents. The sound is awful and the lyrics are indecipherable without the encl. lyric sheet.

- Chris Friedrich

WHAT NOW?

Small Record With 4 Songs EP, Incas
817 Chapel St. N. Providence, CT 06510

Whether What Now? play real noisy pop or exceptionally tuneful punk is irrelevant. This EP is a well high irresistible concoction that uses the same basic ingredients as the best of Mission of Burma or Husker Du, but with very different results. I think this is the pick of the litter!

- Howard Wuelfing

SALEM 66

A Ripping Spin, LP
Homestead Records

Like most dedicated followers of fashion, I've come full circle on these post-folkie Bostonians over the past year or so. The addition of Robert Wilson on rhythm guitar neatly erased the combo's "girl-group" problem and strengthened the overall sound. Lots of work & steady gigging have tightened the formerly-troublesome harmonies and brightened the vocals. Still, the best two songs here are "Across The Sea," nearly 2 years old, and a cover of Wire's pretty "Fragile". I certainly wouldn't mind a bit more edginess and bite in this combo; will having Throwin Muses coming up fast behind them as new critics' darlings and This Year's Model of the 3 gals/1 guy lineup help? Betcha it does.

- Jim Testa

BAS CLAS

"Physical World"/"Serfin' USA"
"Cant Say No"/"La La Ti Da"
Serfdom 45s,
103 Halcott, Lafayette, LA 70503

Bas Clas are pop-conscious rockers out of Louisiana whose music has gone from sturdy Romantics-style power-pop on their '81 debut, "Physical World," to the slicker, mushier MTV-damaged CHR sound of their current 45, "Can't Say No." A classic case of what used to be called unconscious devolution.

- Howard Wuelfing

REVIEWS

JOE BURDETTE & THE NEW WEST

Fake Doom, EP
Lockbox 7295, NYC 10116

Joe Burdette (ex- of local rockabillys the Gyros) effortlessly spins out the sort of catchy countryish pop that Beat Rodeo has been hacking away at for years. Big twangy Texas guitars, Buddy Holly-come-Bongos harmonies, and a deep, rangy production make this EP a winner. You can't help but grin as Burdette's spicy, reedy voice cuts through the mix of bright, treble guitars and Sun Sessions-spare percussion. Yee-hah!

- Jim Testa

OR ROY COMBO

Or Roy Phono, LP
Fake Doom

I'm sure there are good reasons why the same bright folks who released records by Joe Burdette and the Cucumbers would unleash this disco/synthesizer crap on the world. Like blackmail. Or a brain tumor.

- J.T.



DRAMARAMA
(Cinema Verite', LP
?/New Rose, Box 1652, Wayne, NJ 07470

Six of these tracks originally appeared on Dramarama's Comedy EP. The band remixed those tracks, added five new ones, and New Rose, the French label, has released it all as an album. The new mixes of old tunes like "Visiting The Zoo" and the band's sinuous cover of "Femme Fatale" sound better than ever, and the new songs have a quicker pulse and a more glimmering sound than Comedy. This is bright, lively, thinking-man's pop, a tightly-woven state-of-the-art recording by a band that lives in the studio.

- Jim Testa

LYDIA LUNCH & LUCY HAMILTON
The Drowning of Lucy Hamilton, (Music From the Original Soundtrack)
Widowspeak, import

The Drowning is an album of spooky noodling featuring Lucy Hamilton, late of Mars, bawling on bass clarinet and geetar & the inestimable Lydia Lunch clawing at geetar and piano. It doesn't knock over an aesthetic barrier anyone I know has skinned their shins on lately, but does fall in comely fashion 'pon the ears nonetheless. All Lunchmeat connoisseurs should investigate while the rest of you should start taping your weird Uncle Waldo's Edgar Varese records.

- Howard Wuelfing

RAUNCHHANDS
El Rancho Grande, LP
Relativity Records

America's answer to the Rolling Stones? Hell, why not? They've been called everything from "The Kings of Shit Rock" to "downright lowlife scum," but those monikers are a bit misleading. The 'Hands have roots in early American blues, rhythm, and country/western. You hear 'em profoundly on this new EP, where a cover of a Ray Charles rave-up ("Mess Around") can coexist with a piece of Mexicali soundtrack music. Sure, their originals are dirty, and sure, they're sexist, and sure some of dem riffs sound lifted. But wasn't all that what made the Stones so great mega years before?

- Mike Stark

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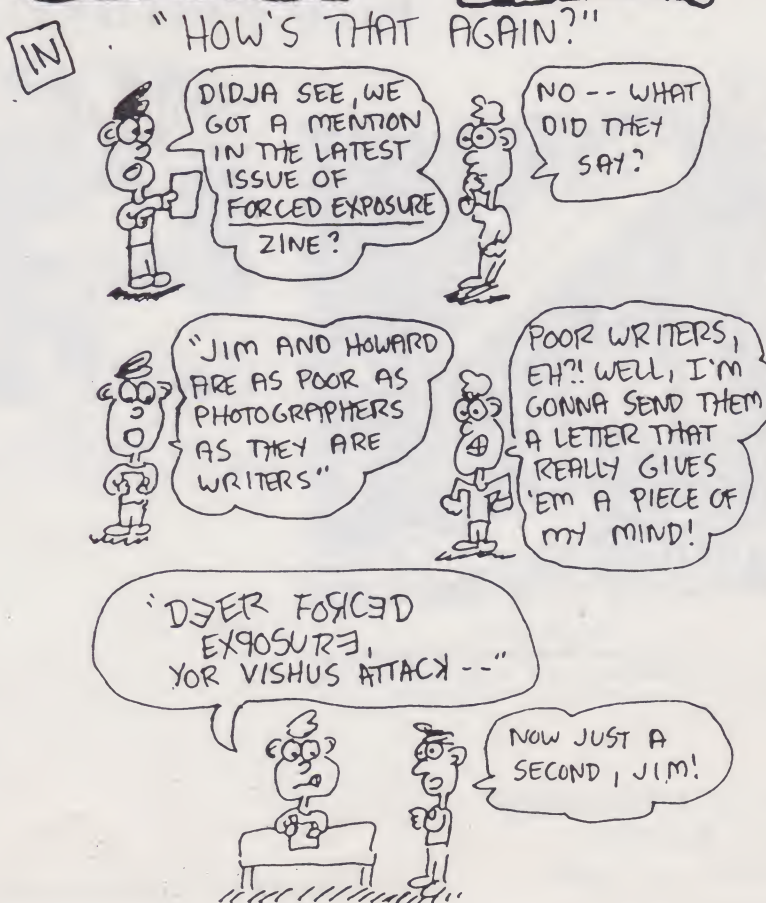
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EDITORIAL REPLY?

JERSEY BEAT!



REVIEWS

BLOODSPORT "I Am The Game" 12" EP (Homestead Records, c/o Dutch East India Trading, P.O. Box 570, Rockville Center, NY 11571-0570)

This Chicago band is a sort of a mesh of heavy metal and hardcore, with all uptempo songs featuring some inventive breaks and tempo changes, and a great guitarist (there are no names on the sleeve). Recorded in February of '85, there's a very clean, bright mix but the vocals are buried; what lyrics are clear aren't anything you haven't heard before. The tunes are well-written with a lot of original riffs in minor keys. "Killing Floor" is not the Albert King classic but an original instrumental with an overlaid motivational tape (the Dale Carnegie type). Bloodsport can be reached at: 2451 N. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60614. --Chris Friedrich

THE ARTICLE "Stay" LP (Dental Records, P.O. Box 284, Staten Island, NY 10305)

This quintet's debut LP contains nine songs co-written and co-produced by vocalist Greg Brasco and drummer Cal Kelly. Although this is very well-played and well-written AOR-oriented stuff, I can't imagine too many Jersey Beat readers would be interested in this genre. Throughout the LP I kept hearing too many echoes of Van Halen's "Jump" and a lot of the Cars less interesting stuff. "Never Let You Go" has some nice twists on the traditional I-VI-IV-V chord progression, and "Stay" features what sounds like a harpsichord by Charlie Gysel and some punchy power chords. Throughout the LP, guitarist Tom Rocko overloads his arena solos with every conceivable gimmick, and there are no keyboard solos despite having two keyboardists in the band. Half of the lyrics to "A Christmas Song" are written in German, and the song is a grim, depressing song about how bored the singer is with Christmas. Their heavy-handed attempts to point out the hypocrisy surrounding this holiday compare poorly with the sardonic wit that made Tom Lehrer's "A Christmas Carol" a classic thirty years ago. It reminded me of the mantra of the original rock'n'roller, Ed Norton: "Sheesh, what a grouch". --Chris Friedrich



PLACEBO RECORDS

distributed by: rough trade, jem, important, dutch east india, sounds good, *Caroline*, systematic, greenworld, toxic shock

NEW



ARTLESS 12" EP

You've read his columns in Maximum Rock n' Roll now you can hear Mykel Board and his band Artless on this new Vinyl Masterpiece! Comes complete with etching of Mykel on flip-side...\$5.00.



DRY LUNGS

Industrial music compilation from all over the world (Controlled Bleeding, Mertzlow, John Duncan, Maybe Mental, Sleep Chamber + 13 others) 16 songs (\$6.00)



MORE COFFEE FOR THE POLITICIANS

Phoenix Underground Music Compilation #3
GFA, Zany Guys, Sun City Girls, Mighty Spinster,
ONS, Harvest, Maybe Mental + 7 others
14 songs (\$6.00)

PLACEBO RECORDS

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URGENT FURY

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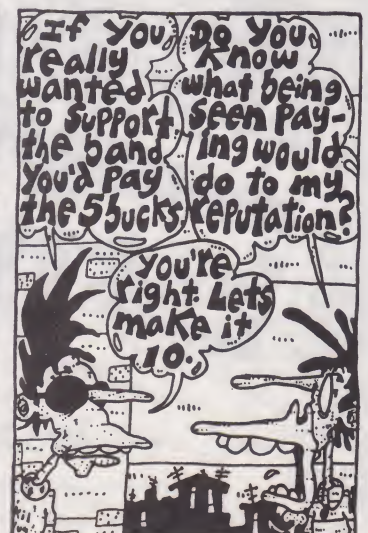
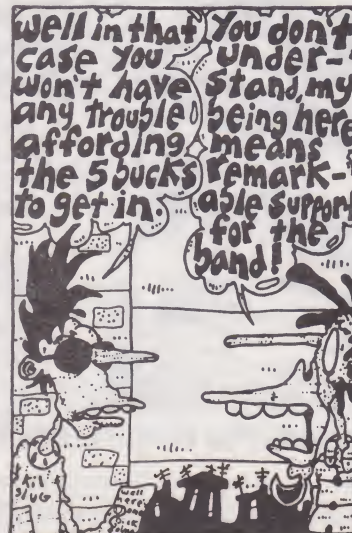
Hardcore paints itself into a corner and then complains there's no room to dance. I listen for the voices of those with something different to say. When I first heard Urgent Fury, it was there.

Hardcore traditionally has been the expression of suburban youth; Urgent Fury is from the South Bronx, two worlds away from the lives of pampered rebellion enjoyed by the children of the affluent and powerful, by those who formed the h-c scenes of SoCal and D.C. How do you measure the difference between the offspring of admirals and diplomats who write songs like "Guilty of Being White" and Abraham Rodriguez, Jr. of the So. Bronx, who daily walk home in his "punk" leather jacket represents a gauntlet of survival, in a barrio ruled by the sounds of Salsa and rap?

The five songs on Urgent Fury's demo express a new hardcore politics of despair and desire; a sincere commitment to something better, a passion for justice, a devotion to what is right. These are heartfelt adolescent emotions and hardcores from all backgrounds share them; but listening to Urgent Fury, one can't but hear something truer. Rodriguez' guitar is a shapeless roar of dissonant anger, Jeff Rogoff's bass a h-c throb, the drums full of hard-rock bluster and h/m power. The voices strain for the right harmonies with fevered abandon. The words are good words, never preachy but often pointedly political.

In "Tet," the heart of Urgent Fury beats loudest. The song boasts a special quality seldom heard in hardcore: Empathy. Most hardcore lyrics are couched in typical adolescent self-absorption: I want, I hate, I need!!! "Tet" is the story of a Vietnam vet told from the young soldier's point of view: "If you could hear/the sound of death so near/If you could only see/the things that happened to me." The song breathes life into experiences that the young Rodriguez could only have imagined through television, movies, or books; but his song gets inside the head of that veteran and makes you see the horror and the rejection of his experience. It is a view worth seeing, a song worth hearing. Urgent Fury is a band worth listening for.

- Jim Testa



Live Cheezcake Cassette
F.C.C. (Fanous Cheezcake)
c/o Eric Tucker, 5 Windsor Terr. Holmdel, NJ 07733 (\$2.50)

This band is named after a misprint on a diner menu in these boys' hometown. My favorite diner is the Whippany Diner. Ever been there? Anyway, these guys have a kool 2-guitar sound on these cuts recorded live at various venues, like CB's and City Gardens at various dates and auditions. The sound quality is good and the music is somewhat melodic thrash-punk rock stuff. Altho there's no lyric sheet, you can understand most of the stuff, and it sounds GOOD TO ME. It's about social problems, rich, annoying people, Mikey, and the like. Plus there's a cover of the Banana Splits song (thrash - and trashed - out) and a long, deafening roar of "In A Gadda da Vida," recorded before F.C.C. was F.C.C. in a basement.

OK, the music isn't too original; it is derivative but nonetheless, it is enjoyable in a happy-go-lucky kind of Southern New Jersey kind o' way. The band is versatile, as shown on their ska-ish cover of "Wild Thing," which is a great fun something-or-other. The lyrics are sort of dumb on some songs, but really thought-out on others.

In all, a good choice for two and a half bucks. If you're tired of being downtrodden and depressed, look into this one. Also available: 4 different F.C.C. stickers for \$1.

- Dan X



TAPES

LEEWAY - ENFORCER demo cassette write: LEEWAY 33-03 143rd St. Flushing, N.Y., 11354. Tapes are \$3, postpaid.

Yeeow! Yeah, I know... heavy metal... bleccch. But LEEWAY have something that I can't quite pinpoint. The intense power of the best speed metal is combined with the originality of the finest hardcore. These guys used to be called the Unruled, but they got rid of the generic name and got a new sound. The vocals scorch, and the music slashes and burns. The lyrics fortunately do not fall into the stupid satanic rut. The title song of the demo (and my favorite) "Enforcer" deals with macho attitudes portrayed in westerns and Eastwood flicks. Plus there's a track about Goetz (an old topic, but this tape was recorded over the summer). By the way, its sort of against him. The rest of the songs (5 in all) deal with personal and scene subjects.

The music, however, is what makes this tape great for me. These fellas have quite a command of their instruments. The hooks on some the tunes are unforgettable (the chorus of "Enforcer") unlike most metal-core crossover stuff. Since the words are decent, too, I would say this venture is a good bargain if you're interested in POWER. Lots of good bands coming out of Queens lately. Weird, huh? This tape might thrill you if you dig Corrosion of Conformity.

by Dan X



on Modern Method Records

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by Mike 'The Chameleon' Stark

The BIG DRONE of GREAT WALL

It was in Texas. Not Dallas or some other shard of civilization, but back road, truck-stop-styled Texas, where Men are all cowboys, Women are merely pincushions for their boyfriends' pushin's, and beer flows as freely and cheaply as the vomit on its many bars' sawdust floors. I was in one o' dem sawdust-and-vomit encrusted bars when I first happened upon Great Wall. Unlike me, the Great Chameleon, the band just didn't fit in with the surroundings. I feared a brawl, a lynching, anything, 'cause these dudes jest didn't fit with the cowpokes. They took the stage, which wasn't protected by chicken wire, and I wrote them off immediately as S.T.B. D. (Soon To Be Dead). They were playing without a net, and it showed on their faces. "What the hell were four brooding, angst-ridden minimalists doing in butt-fuck Texas anyway?" I asked. I later asked myself the same question but I'm the Chameleon, and I go where I please with little trouble - sometimes, I mean, when I'm not looking for it, that is.

The band plugged in their instruments and a sweet drone soon figured out of the tiny bar's amplifiers. Now, Texans don't like little drones - they like big babooms; stomping fiddles, Mickey Gilley, and Stella Parton (yum, Stella), but something funny happened. There was a surprisingly small dosage of violence from these cowpokes. One galoot turned to his galoot buddy with a beer bottle raised in the air and ready for throwing. "Should I bean them sissy boys?"

"It would be a terrible waste of perfectly good brew," his friend replied, and the two agreed on that point. "Hey, isn't that a Creedence tune dem boys are doing?"

"Sure sounds like one, but that ain't no Fogerty belching on dem vocals, and Creedence never droned like that. Help me a second. I want to throw this cinder block at 'em."

"But I kinda like it." And he did like it, and the place was getting drunk enough to appreciate the drone, and even though the four boys from the North Country didn't play super-fast, or have pedal steel, or big tits, the Texans seemed to get into the groove. This shocked even the liberal-minded Chameleon, who never thought a band could please both intellectual Velvet Undergorund fans and good ole American flag wavers.

After the first set, I bought their drummer, Jim DeRogatis, a brew. He was still wearing a few from the less-mannered audience members, but he accepted my invite, and I drunk the band's history out him. It goes sorta like this...

They were all Manhattan college student, some at Columbia, some at NYU, but all four majored in brooding, Kafka, and Tom Verlaine. Their sound often brings to mind the Feelies and the Talking Heads, but through that minimalist drone, there is a harder edge. That's what captured the Texans. Their pseudo-intellectual lyrics, penned by lead guitar/vocalist Rich Turnbull, won over the college-radio crowd, and their serious-faced bookends (Pete Pedulla on bass and Ron Williams on guitar) turned on the anorexic dwellers of the Lower East Side.

"Still, Jim, I see that you guys do every once break out and really go low life wild sometimes, but tell me, just who the Hell would invite you to their party?"

"We're not the partying kind, but if you need test answers for a philosophy final... you come to us."



PHOTO BY ANDY PETERS

Yeah, I knew the type they really were. Probably were a real hit with those girls who wear black berets, smoke clove cigarettes, and write their own poetry. The Chameleon don't go for chicks like that, but then again, if you drone, and ya brood, and ya like Lou Reed all too much, then I guess you'll be taking anything you can get.

Suddenly, our little chat was interrupted by the apt bar wench. She leaned over real far like to replace our liquid damage, which gave the two of us ample viewing of her purple mountain majesties. Jim, being a gentleman, averted his eyes, but I kept on looking straight ahead - I look at whatever I please to. Guess I noticed her blushing, so I returned my gaze to the other Great Wall, and addressed him my final comment.

"Well, you guys sure do have guts. Thought you'd be torn apart up there, but I gather that's part of the territory."

"Oh, we've been in worse scrapes," chimed Jim. "Once we opened for a Mod band, and natty suits and Beatle boots were really flying that night."

THE END

THE IMAGINARY BOYS, 4-song demo cassette

Cool name and coming from the working class town of Ellabeth, equally polluted like its twisted sister city, Linden (my hometown, ugh). An interesting lead vocal and guitar-led quartet, who write memorable but moody tunes and have recently played at Maxwells, the Jetty, and DOS. A cool tape, too.

"Children" has a unique structure of two contrasting extremes - the brooding drawl of singer Tim McConway invites us (as children) to come and play, mixed with the enticing, mesmerizing angelic guitar-twinkling Al Vox. This goes right into a splashing, swirling, fiery section, as we hear of the results in black and blue. Back and forth, between calm and storm...sometimes we don't know who to trust; real confusion. Well done.

The oddly catchy "Cry Today" really rings true. The controlled passion of the normal-sounding singer (Jim Morrison as the common man?) pleads as Vox' guitar spins positively uppity, jangling, and slightly angered. Gliding together as the vocals desperately attempt to breathe and gasp. Inspired by the chemical plant odor of Elizabeth, where I worked for many years, where my father contracted and died of lung cancer... "How Many More Will Die Today?" spews the chorus. I couldn't have said it better.

There is an almost primal drone to the guitar throb of "Somewhere Before." In some ways it is not unlike "Found A Job" from the 2nd Talking Heads LP, complete with hypnotic guitar waves and strong, yet twisted vocals, almost nasty. "I've caught your act, I've seen it all before," ambiguous but no less angry. Something in this brew reminds me of some early Airplane, I just can't place my finger on what it is.

The swirling REM-like guitar of "Just Because" spins around the brain, causing us to get lost in that rare moment of bliss, like the two lost souls of the lyrics. The push and pull of desire forces us to forget reason, seems to be what this is about. Once again, catchy in an odd way.

These guys are a truly complete unit, where the music always fleshes out the emotion behind the words. It is good to hear a band doing things on a more subtle level for a change. Mr. Vox mentioned how much he would love to utilize the talents of Donna and Jane of Tiny Lights on some upcoming recording. Some groovy surprises are in store. Joe Boomerang (bass) and Ray Ian (drums) round out the group.

- Bruce Gallanter



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THE GREAT WALL

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A guy just can't get a break. I thought I retired from this column last ish when L. Cravat took over. But Cravat skipped town, an angry crowd of Long Island mods hot on his heels [he was last seen in L'Amours, downing Boilermakers and whole pizzas in the company of 'Metal' Mike Ferris - Ed.] and I'm back. At least there are some hot tapes this time 'round, not to mention the presentation of the coveted Read Tape 0' The Year Award.

But first, a 4-song demo from the Tidal Waves. As the name implies, this is a collection of surf instrumentals, three of 'em quite familiar ("Walk, Don't Run," "Munsters Theme," and the theme from "Hawaii 5-0"). I give is a 10 for chopsmanship but a -2 for originality. This still might be fun to slip on at a party (if you don't own the originals, that is).

Also high on chops but low on originality is Need State, a very run-of-the-mill (and now defunct) hardcore band recorded live at New Brunswick's fabulous Court Tavern. Yawn.

Dae Yahoos is another band that's being heavily hyped, but their 4-song demo doesn't indicate why. These remnants of the Sickidz, produced by the legendary/marvelous/awe-inspiring Ben Vaughn, sound too much like the Cramps - to use a recurring Read Tape lamentation: You've Heard This Before. However, the playing is gutsy enough to indicate that these guys might be winners live. Let's see...

Drumbones blew in from Ohio a while back and sounded a bit like XTC, skewed pop fulla strange hooks. Their 4-song demo, however, sounds like a cross between Thomas Dolby and Wham! The less said the better.

On the other hand, I can't say enough about a 12-song cassette by The Larries. This is gritty, rip-roarin' stuff with a cornpone sense of humor. The title: "Shit From The Chicken Coop To Fall In Love By" (The Chicken Coop is the band's West Virginia studio). These are the kinda guys playing rock 'n roll simply to get laid; hence they do it with a vengeance. More power to 'em. You can write the boys c/o 1102 23rd Street, Vienna, WV 26105. They also have a 45 with several of the same songs in earlier versions available for \$2.50.

Ray Mason receives a Read Tape Honorable Mention for '85 in recognition of three fine cassette-only releases: It's Time To Captivate A Planet, Who's Minding the Store, and Love Walk. He makes these tapes available for free to fanzines and fans and he loves to get mail, so write him at 58 Hawley Street, Northampton, MA 01060. And now for the tape of the year award. The envelope, please...

And it's Frank Kogan, "Stars Vomit Coffee Shop"!!

This 14-song tape was originally reviewed in July with far fewer words than it deserves. A neatly-packaged, annotated collection, it spans Kogan's musical career as a member of Red Dark Sweet, through the Pillowmakers, and finally to some newer material done solo. The solo stuff is the definite highlight. Sparse, brutally truthful vignettes like "Baby Doe," "Grenadine Blood," and "Transit Cop Kicks Bum Off The BMT" recall the Velvets in their evocative lyrics and monochromatic but furious sound. The Pillowmakers' "Linda Lu Pissed on Hitler's Kneecap" and Red Dark Sweet's "Mrs. Henson" are also powerful, as is the title track, the most cutting comment on the synophantic club scene I've heard. The sound quality throughout is sketchy at best (most of the songs were recorded live on simple equipment), but spirit and the sense of immediacy make up for it.

Kogan quit Red Dark Sweet and spent a year finishing this tape and failing to put a new band together in New York. He recently fled for the friendlier climes of San Francisco. It bugs me that I never had a chance to see him live. He recently wrote that shortly after moving west, he was invited up on stage and played to a good response; maybe Frisco will treat him well and a few more songs will be forthcoming. Until then, by all means, write for this tape (625 Ashbury St. #11, San Francisco, CA 94117), an amazing accomplishment and the best cassette to grace this column in 1985.

THE LARRIES

RED TAPE
by jim derogatis



Yes, the spiritual dessication which the Winter Solstice visits upon the sentient populace has arrived with a vengeance and the only recourse I find is incense, Rheingold, and Samuel Delany. As for soundtrack...

"Hunter/Killer" b/w "Judy Mach 7" (Raunchy, 1205 S. State St., Hillside, NJ 07205) is my favorite thing from SMERSH ever. Perhaps it's the dosage: two pithy 3-minute eruptions. Or maybe it's the way they overlay vintage Cabaret Voltaire guitar-driven power-dirge with percolating Normal-style synth sequencing. Probably both. "Hunter/Killer" especially deserves to be a hit 'mong hipper dj's. Too bad 8BC closed.

PRINCIPLES OF LITERARY CRITICISM strike up a stock REM-via-Neats chapter of ethercal gtr. and conversational bass on "She Gets" (No Prior?, RR #1, Box 348, Jobstown, NJ 08041), but proceed to enliven same considerably with fey vocalizing from one Larry Archer. Archer's distinctive Ray Davies-inflected warbles similarly whip considerable redemption 'pon the otherwise too-predictable pop motions of "Maybe."

BLUE TV's "Back In Time"/"Train Wrecks" (Twilight, no address given) have typical post-REM drone pop changes delivered with a crisper guitar attack than such thangs usually get. If you still like this genre, you'll like this fine!

"World Without End"/"Back Into The Future"

GET SMART

Fever Records, 621 S. 4th St. Philadelphia, PA 19147

I quite understand why the editor of this 'zine thought this live single from Chi-town's Get Smart the pick of this litter o' singles. "World Without End" right for-cibly evokes the attack of the classic 3-piece Bongos. The tune's reet solid and delivered with telling authority on jittery guitar and bass, over rompin' stompin' drums. Vocal interplay twixt gtrst. and bassie Lisa sounds quite brill-y on the cochlea too.

Cleveland has held a weird wondrous space in the annals of American Alternative Rock and DEATH OF SAMANTHA are either assiduous scholars thereof, shallow rip-off artists, or just plumb crazy. "Coca-Cola & Licorice" opens with a mix of wily wonka saxing, ululating gtr. feedback and stompabilly lead vocals...then kicks-in in earnest! 'Conjures up fond memories of Cle. icons The Numbers Band, Bizarros, and foetal Cramps (Cleveland was a crucial nesting place for Nick, Lux, and Ivy, y'know) OR could be D.O.S. are trying to filch thunder from l'il Stevie Wynn and Les Pinkholes. Whichever, the recipe makes little or no sense at all and works like a dream. Flip's ok too, where it quotes Pere Ubu's erstwhile axe mage Tom Hermann most assiduously.

THE BIG STICK BAND

"Hell On Earth" + 3

Recess Records, 26-10 18th St.
Astoria, NY 11102

The Big Stick Band touch on a number of usual obnoxious mod-pop trends and transform them into something quite charming. The four cuts here are built on a big Big BIG! beatbox sound that Rick Rubin will envy and then slathers droning modal guitar and monotone vocals. Friggin' great!

RAUNCHETTES

"Slaughter The Pig"/"Your Eyes"

Jargon, Box 90594, Rochester NY 14609

"Slaughter The Pig" is very much an off-the-track rock 'n rawl item structurally but reaps significant redemption from a trashy rhythm guitar sound and continental-plate thick bass. The Raunchettes achieve what Joan Jett could've if she'd sat in on the sessions for GI 'steada staying put in the producer's chair.

DIRT HEROES

Out Of The Basement Into Your Ear EP

Propulsion, Box 1563, Flushing, NY 11354

The Dirt Heroes turn in lackluster performances of undistinguished tunes on this 4-song EP. This is all vaguely poppy but without those essential ingredients: catchy hooks, strong vocal melodies. Back to rec room, kids!

DISCORDS

by HOWARD WUELFING



BIG STICK

SMERSH - "A Murder of Crows" cassette
 % Chris Shepard, 337 William St. Piscataway NJ 08854

The SMERSH men are at it again. Seeming to be both fascinated and disgusted by modern dance music simultaneously, that same primitive pounding beat is also found at the center of most of their music, and usually provided by the nastiest-sounding drum machine known to mankind. SMERSH layers immensely thick throbbing guitar, bass, and vocal distortions on top, to give some character to their otherwise alien landscapes. Often, only the textures of various distorted elements change within these pieces. Just two guys, ever exploring, ever disturbing. Most appropriate song titles, as well.

"Homer & The Fire" features the hypnotic tribal chant of "uh, uh, ugga bugga uh"... and shouted neuro vocals that never let up. Ominous torturous draining claustrophobic warped machinery with its own heartbeat. The incredibly fat bass pulse is thick as molasses. A cosmic haze surrounds this dense scenery.

Even the rhythm of the washing-machine sounds found in "Taboo" has its trance-like qualities. The naked background percussion is gripping, too. You can't really make out the vocals, but you can sure feel the words spew forth.

In "Hunter Killer," the molten spastoweird guitar warpage gets even more dense. It's back-to-basics sludge with that mean Chrome/Crimson dark edge. The guitar fucking growls. An ugly tone even Big Black would be proud of. How anyone can get those cheap rhythm boxes to sound so tribal is beyond me.

My favorite piece is the furthest extreme for SMERSH - "What The Peeper Saw." Finally, time slows down, as we submerge in a suspenseful, yet subtle environment. Calming yet creepy. Sad and lifeless, but not quite dead, yet. Suspended in-between...electronic glowing substances provide a meditative reserve. Things get even stranger during the 2nd half, as sounds are stretched past their limits. Where am I??

If your brain ain't melting by now, then you must be brain dead. Where do these guys get all these sounds?? We better stick SMERSH in the next space shuttle because these guys are already out there. SMERSH has composed a special piece exclusively for the upcoming 2nd Jersey Beat compilation as well. Are you ready? Acquire this tape at your own risk.

- Bruce Lee Gallanter

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